

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PINT, IT

SUBJECT: MILAN COMMUNIST LEADER ON PCI PROBLEMS

1. ELIO QUERCIOLI, FORMER MANAGING DIRECTOR OF L'UNITA, MILAN CITY COUNCILMAN, CITY SECRETARY AND SINCE JUNE 1976, M.P. HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST CANDID AND AUTHORITATIVE OF OUR PCI CONTACTS. AFTER LONG INTERVAL (76 MILAN 0626) WE MET AT MILAN FAIR APRIL 17. HIS OBSERVATIONS FOLLOW.

2. QUERCIOLI, LED OFF WELCOMING CHANGE IN US VISA POLICY AND HOPED I HAD READ VERY RESPONSIBLE COMMENT MADE BY PECCHIOLI (UEO DELEGATION MEMBER), I POINTED OUT DILEMMA OF INTERPRETING PCI STATEMENTS AND ASKED WHETHER I SHOULD GIVE MORE WEIGHT TO PECCHIOLI OR TO COSSUTA WHO HAD ATTACKED AMERICAN IMPERIALISM WHILE SPEAKING AT PESARO. QUERCIOLI LOOKED HURT AND SHOOK HIS HEAD OBSERVING SADLY THAT COSSUTA SHOULD NOT HAVE SPOKEN AS HE DID. THAT WAS NOT THE RIGHT THING TO HAVE SAID.

3. TURNING TO THE CORRIERE DELLA SERA, I ASKED IF HE WASN'T LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLEASED WITH ITS SUPPORT FOR A LARGER PCI ROLE IN GOVERNMENT? QUERCIOLI, DIDN'T FIND THE CORRIERE VERY HELPFUL RECENTLY. OWNER RIZZOLI HAD MADE HIS PEACE WITH THE DC TO GET FINANCING FOR HIS EMPIRE AND THE PRICE WAS A SHIFT IN LINE UNFAVORABLE TO THE PCI.

4. UNFORTUNATELY, RUNNING A NEWSPAPER COST A FORTUNE. L'UNITA',

PAESE SERA AND 24 ORE IN SCILY WERE ALL PCI DAILIES AND
THEY WERE ALL LOSING MONEY. ONLY FUND RAISING CAMPAIGNS KEPT
THEM ALIVE.

5. MY JOKING THAT THE PCI HAD LOTS OF MONEY FROM ITS COOPERATIVES
AND EAST - WEST TRADE MET WITH AN EARNEST DENIAL. NOT AT ALL,
QUERCIOLI INSISTED. FOR SEVERAL YEARS THE PCI HAS TAKEN NO
E-W MONEY IN ORDER TO ASSURE ITS INDEPENDENCE. NOR HAS IT
GOTTEN A SINGLE LIRA FROM THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT.
INDEPENDENCE WAS COSTLY, HOWEVER. WERE THE PARTY'S FULL
PAGE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, THEN, TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE?
WELL, NOT TOTALLY, BUT ALMOST SO, QUERCIOLI CLAIMED. THE PARTY
HAD LARGE EXPENSES - INCLUDING UNDERWRITING A WEEKLY IN
AUSTRALIA AND CAMPAIGNING AMONG ITALIAN EMIGRANTS THROUGHOUT
WESTERN EUROPE.

6. THAT EXCLUDED FRANCE, HOWEVER. THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY
REFUSED TO ALLOW THE PCI TO BE ACTIVE WITHIN FRANCE ON THE
GROUNDS THAT IF ANYONE WERE GOING TO RECRUIT COMMUNISTS IN
FRANCE, IT WOULD BE THE PCF.

7. QUERCIOLI LOOKED TIRED. COMMUTING TO ROME WEEKLY WHILE
SPEAKING THROUGHOUT ITALY AND KEEPING HIS HAND IN MILAN
AFFAIRS WAS WEARING. A GOOD BIT OF HIS TIME WAS BEING TAKEN
TRYING TO COPE WITH THE CISL AND UIL WHICH WERE CONSTANTLY
OUTFLANKING THE CGIL TO THE LEFT. THAT MADE IT INCREASINGLY
HARD TO MAKE THE CGIL STAND STILL ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT
WERE HARD FOR LABOR TO SWALLOW.

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8. CONCLUDING, QUERICOLI LAMENTED THE CONTINUED FOOT DRAGGING
BY THE UNITED STATES ON L'UNITA'S REQUEST TO OPEN A US OFFICE.
WHEN I REMINDED HIM THAT NO ONE HAD APPLIED FOR A VISA, HE
FROWNED AND SAID THAT THE PCI WAS HESITANT TO APPLY UNTIL IT
WAS SURE THAT THE REQUEST WOULD NOT BE REJECTED.FINA

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